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Garden Tour
Draw Crowd**

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Bench to
Joe Mazzoni Sr.**

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RIVER VALLEY TIMES

41ST YEAR • ISSUE 10

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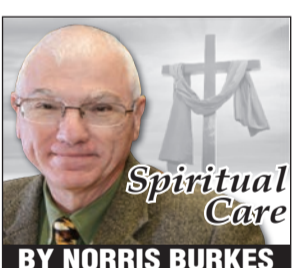
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**NEWSOM BLAMES
BUDGET ON TARIFFS**



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**FOR SAFETY'S
SAKE, LIVE
YOUR LIFE**



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CSD, General Manager Morris Settle for \$375,000



Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board Vice-President John Merchant signs a settlement agreement between the Rancho Murieta Community Services District and General Manager Mimi Morris following a special board meeting on May 12, as district counsel Patrick Enright looks on.

**Story and photos
by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Community Services District has reached a \$375,000 settlement with

General Manager Mimi Morris, who has agreed to resign. The agreement comes four months after her conflict with Board President Steve Booth became public.

The board approved the settlement during a special meeting on May 12.

Following a 46-minute closed session with district counsel Patrick Enright, the board returned to open session, where Vice-President John Merchant reported on the outcome.

"The board voted 3 to 0 to reach a settlement agreement with Ms. Morris and

that concludes the report," Merchant said.

Merchant and Directors Tim Maybee and Linda Butler voted in favor of the agreement. Booth and Director Randy Jenco were absent.

Following the meeting, *Continued on page 7*

Firefighter Rescues Cat from Treetop



Firefighter Robert Santos hands Chungus to owner Jennifer Cowell and her daughter Glory after rescuing the indoor cat from a treetop on May 2. Photo courtesy of Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District

**By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - A frightened indoor cat that clung to a lofty treetop overnight was safely rescued on May 2, thanks to cooperation between the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District and the Rancho Murieta Association Maintenance Department.

Neighbors cheered and clapped after the firefighter brought the cat down in the bucket of an RMA boom truck following a rescue that lasted around three hours. The rescue took place on Pera Drive, on the walkway that connects the street to Lago Drive near the mailboxes.

Jennifer Cowell, the cat's owner, said he was one of five, two-day-old kittens that her family rescued and bottle-fed for eight weeks. Chungus has always been an indoor cat, even though he often tried to sneak outside. But when he heard a dog bark, he ran back inside. This time was different.

Cowell and her daughters, Sophie and Glory, kept calling him until they finally heard him meowing in a tree. Distraught, Cowell and her daughters, who were crying, went to Station 59 about 10 p.m.

Cowell said the firefighters recognized the girls from a field trip but told them that they couldn't take immediate action that night. They also thought it likely the cat would come down on its own.

When Chungus didn't come down and climbed even higher, the firefighters responded in fire trucks with flashing lights about 9 a.m.

Cowell said Firefighter Rob Santos climbed a ladder as high as possible and then began climbing up the branches. But when they became too thin for him to get any further, his captain called RMA Maintenance for help.

Continued on page 5

Fashion, Flair Delight Guests at Elegant Luncheon



The Rancho Murieta Women's Club presents "A Royal Tea Affair Fashion Show" at the Rancho Murieta Country Club on May 7. Maxine Feil models an outfit from The Clothes Mine in Sutter Creek.

**Story and photos
by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Designed to make every guest feel like royalty for a day, "A Royal Tea Affair Fashion Show" took place at the Rancho Murieta Country Club on May 7. The Rancho Murieta

Women's Club presented the gala luncheon.

Impeccably dressed "Dukes" shuttled guests to and from the parking lot, escorted them down the foyer steps and offered glasses of champagne before hostesses directed them to their tables. Nearly all 184 attendees arrived in elegant attire, with many wearing hats befitting a royal

affair. Club President Bonnie Kirschman praised event organizers Erin Bailey, Theresa Ilaga and Janelle Rogers.

"They did such a wonderful job," she said. "The Murieta Room looked spectacular, and the theme was carried out down to every last detail with the centerpieces, tea kettle gift

Continued on page 3

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Garden Club Plant Sale, Garden Tour Draw Crowd

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Billed as a “Plant Sale Extravaganza,” the event lived up to its name as the River Valley Garden Club opened for business in the RMA Building parking lot on May 10.

Vice President Nancy Compton said it was challenging to estimate attendance.

“But it was packed from the moment we opened until about noon, when the pace slowed a bit,” she said.

Nearly 100 people purchased Garden Stroll tickets to tour six private gardens alongside the plant sale.

“The gardens this year were spectacular, each with a unique focus showing the creativity and dedication of the homeowners,” Compton said. “The feedback from the homeowners and garden strollers was over the top.”

Each garden also showcased a local artist, who displayed pottery, jewelry and woodturnings. Artwork in watercolor, acrylic and fabric was also on display.

Some of the most popular items at the sale included annuals, succulents, Japanese maples, and tomato and pepper plants. The event, held the day before Mother’s Day, saw the floral arrangements crafted by the club’s design team fly off the shelves. The sale also featured a raffle for a garden cart filled with garden-themed items, two tables of garden décor, and consultations with master gardeners.



Assisted by garden club member Debbie Kolmodin, Brenda Alexander selects garden art at the River Valley Garden Club’s Plant Sale Extravaganza, held in the RMA Building parking lot on May 10. Photo by Gail Bullen

A unique attraction was an instructional table where children could make a Mother’s Day gift while their parents shopped.

“We believe that we are the only garden club anywhere that includes this special component for our families,” Compton said.

Compton praised all who contributed to the event.

“An event of this scope takes a prodigious number of dedicated volunteers, including the six homeowners who opened their lovely gardens to visitors, our many generous sponsors, the RMA Maintenance Department that helped with logistics, and over 50% of the club members who participated in a multitude of ways to ensure the success of this event,” she said.

The plant sale and garden tour served as the club’s major fundraiser for the year.

All proceeds supported scholarships for horticulture students and grants for



A sunroom extends the backyard garden at the home of Karen Matney and Lonnie Nielson on Trinidad Drive.



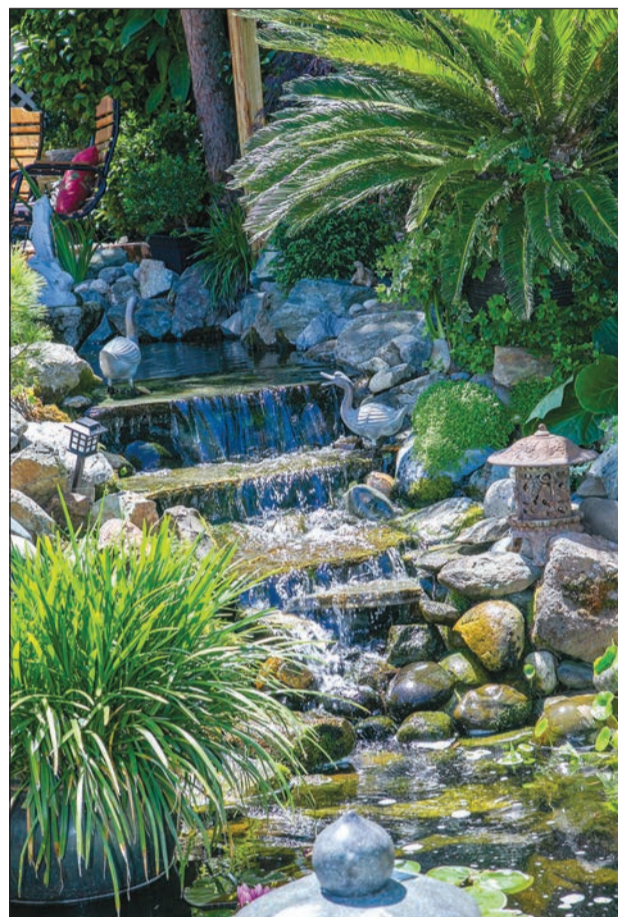
Ann Wolf photographs a Koi pond at the home of Mindy Cecchetti on Callaway Drive.

community projects. More information about the club is available at

rivervalleygardenclub.net. See more photos at the rivervalleytimes.com ★



Garden Stroll attendees tour the Ventana Drive backyard garden that Marlene and John Merchant began cultivating 40 years ago in a rocky landscape dominated by a large slab of stone.



A picturesque waterfall cascades into a koi pond at the home of Robin and Robert Kauffman on Murieta South Parkway.



Dining among the trees is a highlight of the backyard garden at the home of Elizabeth and Frank Meyer on Pera Drive.



Diane and Steve Critchlow’s garden on Murieta South Parkway draws visitors in before they even step out of their cars.



Bonnie and Duane Kyser admire how Carol and Bob Prinzo have transformed their small courtyard into a garden at 6531 Chesbro Circle.

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Fashion, Flair Delight Guests at Elegant Luncheon

Continued from page 1
boxes and programs. They didn't miss a thing."

The main event followed lunch: a fashion show featuring lively commentary, a new addition this year. As each model walked the runway, Bailey introduced her by name and shared details about the outfit, including the name of the boutique that provided it.

"Ladies, welcome Donna to the stage. This classic denim look by Chico's creates a chic yet relaxed statement for Donna. The light teal green T-shirt and the jacket is perfect for summertime fun."

The 64 spring and summer outfits ranged from casual to dressy and were practical choices for women living in Rancho Murieta. Participating boutiques included The Clothes Mine, Tomorrow's Heirloom, UBU in Sutter Creek, White House Black Market Palladio, Soma Palladio, Chico's Palladio, the Cupola at the Murieta Inn and the Rancho Murieta Country Club Pro Shop.

The show ended on a royal note. The three organizers stepped out and asked the audience to applaud all of the models standing beside the runway.

"What a splendid celebration this has been," Bailey said. "The fashions, the finery and the flair. Truly a celebration of style, most becoming of the Murieta Court."

"Indeed, Lady Erin, we are most grateful to the lovely models who graced our runway with such poise, and to our dear guests, whose presence made this afternoon nothing short of enchanting."



Elaine Creighton and Bonnie Newton, in the back, catch a shuttle from the parking lot with Fred Perkins, one of the "Dukes" escorting guests to the event.



Fashion show organizers, from left: Janell Rogers, Theresa Ilaga and Erin Bailey tell the audience that Rancho Murieta knows how to host a royal affair



Francie Cruz-Woessner models a black-striped halter dress from White House Black Market.



JudyRenee Fowler and her son Easton sport matching American flag sweaters from The Cupola.



Bob Keil and Darren Woessner escort Gloria McCarron down the stairs with a flourish.

Ilaga said.

"May your hearts be light, your teacups full, your closets inspired," Rogers added.

"Until we gather again, let it be known that Rancho Murieta knows how to host a royal tea affair," Ilaga concluded.

Kirschman said the event, which included a luncheon featuring tea sandwiches and scones and

a boutique in the Terrace Lounge, was a success.

"The raffle and silent auction were very successful," she said. "I believe we had more stores represented and a lot of new people involved, beginning with the committee, right through to all of the other volunteers: Dukes, Dresser, and Hostesses.

"In addition, it appears we gained several new

members... It was a win-win, and a wonderful day."

Attendee Vicki Kalman was full of praise for the event.

"Having the gentlemen in their tuxedos waiting for us in the reception area was very charming," she said.

Kalman also was struck by the transformation of the Murieta Room.

"It could have been a reception for a queen right

down to the flowers," she said. "I thought it was way better than a senior ball."

Afterward, The River Valley Times asked the organizers how they came up with the theme. Ilaga explained that they wanted something elegant, timeless and fun. The inspiration, she explained, was the classic tradition of afternoon tea, with a regal twist.

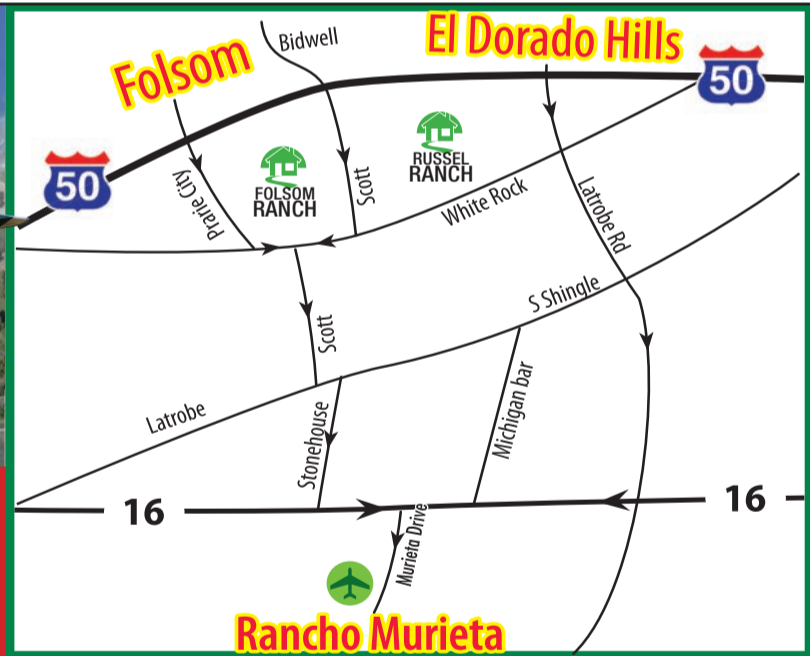
"It gave us the perfect backdrop to blend sophistication with creativity and to encourage our guests to feel like royalty for a day," Ilaga said. "Every detail was designed to create an experience that felt both warm and elevated, just like a royal gathering."

See more fashion photos online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★

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Kiwanis Dedicates Bench to Joe Mazzoni Sr.

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - An hour after the Kiwanis Club's Kids Fishing Day concluded at Lake Clementia on May 3, friends and family gathered near the boat dock to dedicate a bench in honor of the event's founder.

Longtime Rancho Murieta resident Joe Mazzoni Sr., who died last summer, organized the first Fishing Day over 20 years ago. A retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manager, he was the cornerstone of the Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta and left a lasting mark on the community through decades of dedicated volunteer service.

After the club secured the bench, Rancho Murieta Association General Manager Rod Hart arranged for a concrete slab to be poured and installed at a spot overlooking the lake where Mazzoni had brought so much joy and laughter to the community.

The bench inscription reads: In Honor of Joe Mazzoni Sr. Founder of Kids Fishing Day, Beloved Kiwanis member and friend.

Bronwyn Anthony, who knew Joe through 18 years of Kiwanis service, delivered a tribute she co-authored with John and Susan Sozzi. She described Mazzoni as the "heart and soul" of Kids Fishing Day, emphasizing his enduring enthusiasm and love of nature. "Joe brought out the best in people," she said, calling his dedication to community service and environmental education "a true gift."

Club President Bill Kenney, who succeeded Massoni in organizing Kids Fishing Day, shared his reflections. He spoke of how their friendship developed later in life, often over a glass of red wine. Kenney recalled being moved by a family cookbook Mazzoni donated to a fundraiser, filled with stories from his travels and career in the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Mazzoni's commitment to mentoring others was evident in the detailed binder he handed Kenney to help continue the event.

"I became a better person because of Joe," Kenney said, addressing the crowd gathered at the dedication as further proof of Joe's ability to build community.

Kenney also read a letter from Hart,



Kiwanis Club President Bill Kenney shares memories about Joe Mazzoni Sr. on May 3, when the Kiwanis Club dedicated a memorial bench at Lake Clementia. Photo by Gail Bullen



Joe Mazzoni is remembered as a man who gave so much of himself to others, not only in the events he founded but in the many lives he touched. Courtesy photo



Mazzoni's family is delighted about the bench installation in his memory. From left are daughter Cindy Heinz, friend Judy Lyle, grandson Dominick Mazzoni, his dog Coco, grandson Jake Montgomery, and daughters Liz Hanacek and Chris Bacon. Photo by Gail Bullen

who praised Mazzoni's unwavering commitment to Rancho Murieta. From pancake breakfasts to Little League opening days, from Bingo nights to trunk-or-treats, Mazzoni was always there, lending a hand.

"Rancho Murieta became a richer place with Joe in our community," Hart wrote.

Pete Edwards offered a touching story about adopting Mazzoni's beloved dog, Coco, after he died. He said Coco was "kind of like his dad"— calm and easy-going. In his 55 years with Kiwanis, Edwards noted, few had touched him like Mazzoni. "I really liked that man," he

said. "He was a great guy."

Phil Fitch recalled working with Mazzoni to replace the aging buildings at Cosumnes River Elementary School, describing how he helped organize public forums and press local leaders into action.

"Joe was right in the middle of it," he said of the grassroots effort that eventually led to a safer school.

Dia Utterback, another longtime collaborator, remembered starting the community's first crab feed in Mazzoni's kitchen and laughing over his hard-to-read thank-you notes. She credited him with inspiring her continued efforts to raise

funds for scholarships, dictionaries, and Fishing Day.

"I felt like I was hanging out with the cool parents," she said, "and Joe was one of them."

Speaking for her partner, Patrick Chand, Lynne Erpelding shared how Mazzoni's thoughtfulness left a lasting mark. The couple saved every thank-you card he sent.

"Patrick misses Joe terribly," she said, adding that they sometimes set an extra place at dinner when serving salmon, in his memory.

Erin Reid said that after she and Michael Jones co-founded Entertainment, Theatre & Culture, Mazzoni joined the small board in its second year. Despite being older, she said, Mazzoni became one of her best friends.

"He was all about this community," she said, "all about Rancho Murieta."

Cindy Heinz, the oldest of three daughters, said she had tried to persuade her father to move closer to family in Oregon, but he declined. Over time, she realized why.

"He had a whole other family here," she said, gesturing to the crowd.

She expressed deep gratitude to Rancho Murieta residents who embraced and cared for her father, whether by bringing food, dessert, or simply stopping by to visit.

"It was rare and a blessing," she said. "It meant so much to us."

Kenney thanked everyone who came to the dedication.

"Keep Joe in your memory and heart," he said.

This story is also online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★

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Keeping Pets Safe in the Heat: Essential Tips for Pet Owners

Firefighter Rescues Cat from Treetop

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Summer is just around the corner and the days are already heating up in Sacramento County.

As temperatures rise, it's important for pet owners to take precautions to ensure that their furry friends stay safe and comfortable. While we might be able to seek out shade, sip cold drinks or turn on the AC, pets rely on us to protect them from the dangers of extreme heat. Whether you're heading out for a walk, relaxing in the yard or running errands, here are some must-know tips to help your pets beat the heat.

Never leave pets in parked cars! Even on a seemingly mild day, the inside of a parked car can become dangerously hot within minutes. It's not only incredibly risky, it's also illegal in California. Leaving your pet in a vehicle, even with the windows cracked, can be deadly. Always take your pets with you or leave them safely at home.

Hydration is key, so make sure that your pets always have access to fresh, clean water. On hot days, they'll need to drink more than usual to stay hydrated.

If your pet shows signs of heat-related illness, avoid giving them cold water or submerging them in cold baths, as this can shock their system. Instead, offer cool (not cold) water and contact a veterinarian immediately.



Sacramento County encourages residents to be aware that hydration is key, so make sure that your pets always have access to fresh, clean water on hot days. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

Avoid the heat of the day by scheduling walks and outdoor playtime during the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening. Pavement and asphalt can get extremely hot and could burn your pet's paw pads.

A good rule of thumb is to place the back of your hand on the surface for seven seconds and if it's too hot for you, it's too hot for them.

Provide shade and cool spaces if your pet is outdoors and make sure they have plenty of shade and cool drinking water. Indoors, use fans or keep them in an air-conditioned room to help them stay comfortable. A cooling mat or damp towel on the floor can also help pets beat the heat.

Use pet-safe sunscreen for pets with light-colored

fur or exposed skin, especially on the nose and ears, as they can get sunburned. Use a veterinarian-approved pet-safe sunscreen to protect these sensitive areas, especially if they spend time outdoors.

Not all pets are natural swimmers. Always supervise pets around pools or open water and consider using a pet life jacket. Avoid strong currents and cold water, which can cause shock or panic.

Know the signs of heatstroke by recognizing symptoms early, which can save your pet's life. Symptoms include excessive panting or drooling, glazed eyes, a rapid heartbeat, vomiting, lethargy and collapse. If you suspect heatstroke, move your pet to a shaded or cool area immediately and seek emergency veterinary care.

Gradual cooling is best; use a damp towel or gently mist them with water while you wait for help.

To stay informed and prepared for more hot weather pet safety tips and information on how to recognize heat-related illnesses in animals, visit the Sacramento County Animal Care Services website at animalcare.sac-county.gov/Pages/default.aspx.

Looking to adopt a pet? Come meet your future best friend at 3839 Bradshaw Road in Sacramento. The shelter is open from noon to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays and from noon to 6 p.m. Wednesdays.

To license your pet, report a lost or found animal or learn about other available services, visit BradshawShelter.net. ★



An image captured by a drone shows Santos reaching for the cat. RMA Maintenance supplied the boom truck. Photo courtesy of Rancho Murieta Association



A second drone photo shows the bucket angled toward the cat's location. Photo courtesy of Rancho Murieta Association

Continued from page 1

RMA Maintenance Manager Troy Schaffner responded with the association's boom truck, which is used for tree trimming. Cowell said they "really lucked out" because their house is located along the walking path, which allowed the boom truck to get in.

Because firefighters were worried the cat might

scratch, Cowell sent the cat's "comfy blanket" with Santos. But the firefighter didn't need it because the cat came to him, and he could pick him up by the scruff of his neck and hold him without any issues, she said.

Cowell appreciated the patience and helpfulness shown by the firefighters.

"They were just so, so kind," she said. ★



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State Controller Cohen Responds to May Budget Revision

California State Controller's Office News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On May 14, Controller Malia M. Cohen issued the following statement on Governor Gavin Newsom's May Revision:

"When I released my April Cash Report on Friday, I cautioned that although current revenues are exceeding projections and the state has enough reserves to cover expenses this fiscal year, budget forecasts show significant deficits in the years ahead. Addressing these shortfalls will require the governor and legislature to establish clear spending priorities in this budget and upcoming budget cycles.

As the state's chief fiscal officer, with a clear view of what comes in and out of California's checking, savings and credit accounts, I know, just like every Californian does, that we must be extremely cautious about new commitments. Proposals for long-term funding of new programs and services must be weighed carefully. The financial uncertainty ahead is too great to make promises we may not be able to keep.

Like all Californians who check their bank accounts to decide whether they can afford gas, groceries, or the commute to work, I see you, and I understand those daily decisions. That's why I urge all of us to be fiscally prudent. With growing uncertainty around federal funding and other state revenue sources, we must prepare for the possibility of tougher financial times ahead.

I look forward to working with the governor and all members of the legislature to ensure that we have the appropriate cash and reserves to get us through this financially turbulent time so that we can continue to move California forward so that families, individuals, vulnerable populations and businesses can continue to thrive."

Chief Fiscal Officer of California Controller Cohen independently oversees and manages California's financial resources with integrity and transparency to build trust. The controller is responsible for accountability and disbursement of the state's financial resources. Follow the Controller on X at @CAController and on Facebook at California State Controller's Office. ★

Revised State Budget Draws Fire and Praise from Business Leaders

California Business Roundtable News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - On May 14, California Business Roundtable President Rob Lapsley gave a statement in response to Governor Gavin Newsom's revision to the May budget:

"In 2021, Governor Newsom stood before Californians announcing a \$75 billion budget surplus. Four years later, the state faces a \$12 billion deficit. The governor attributes this downturn to the so-called 'Trump Slump,' but the reality is that the state's spending problem was created in California and must be solved in California. In his revised May budget proposal, the governor has simply shifted spending. Proposed cuts to the state's general fund are nearly equal to increased spending in the state's special funds. This accounting maneuver does nothing to solve the underlying deficit.

We support the governor in his

initial efforts to renew market-based climate programs like cap-and-trade while the business community works with the legislature on the details of the reauthorization. We also believe that it is critically important to fund the implementation of Proposition 36 in order to protect communities and businesses.

Importantly, the governor has not proposed new taxes as Californians struggle with the highest cost of living in the country. It is critically important for the governor and the legislature to pass policies that stimulate private sector investment and job creation to ensure the State of California can generate the revenues needed to fund all priority programs and ensure long-term economic stability."

Established in 1976, California Business Roundtable has brought together top executives from California's largest companies, providing a platform for collaboration and strategic advocacy on issues critical to the state's economic health. ★

Gallagher Condemns Newsom's Budget

Assembly of Republicans News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)

- Assembly Republican Leader James Gallagher (East Nicolaus) responded on May 14 to Governor Gavin Newsom's May Revision of the 2025 to 2026 state budget. California is now facing a \$12 billion deficit, and instead of taking responsibility, Newsom opened his press conference by blaming President Donald Trump.

"Newsom's finger-pointing on the budget shortfall is the biggest load of crap I've ever seen from a politician, and he shovels out a lot of it," said Gallagher.

"We're in this mess because of his reckless spending, false promises, and failed leadership... Newsom needs to stop blaming everyone else and own up like a man."

"He promised free healthcare to illegal immigrants. California can't afford it, so he's backpedaling, but still charging taxpayers billions for it over the next year. Meanwhile, our citizens are struggling with the highest costs in a generation, failing infrastructure and underperforming schools."

Under Governor Newsom, state spending has grown by tens of billions of dollars while

outcomes in public safety, education, and affordability have declined. Instead of correcting course, the May revision relies on accounting tricks, reserve raids and delayed payments, without fixing the underlying problems.

Californians are paying more and getting less, and this budget fails to change that. The answer isn't gimmicks or blame games. It's living within our means and putting taxpayers first.

Assembly Republican Leader James Gallagher represents California's 3rd Assembly District, which includes Butte, Glenn, Sutter, Tehama and Yuba counties, and parts of Placer County. ★

Newsom Continues Freefall in 2028 Presidential Candidate Polls

Latest polls give Newsom only 5% support

By Evan Symon, California Globe

Governor Gavin Newsom continued to fall in nationwide 2020 Presidential candidate polling last week, with the most recent Echelon poll giving him only 5% of the vote.

Originally the favorite candidate for the 2028 Presidential Election, Newsom has dramatically fallen in polls in the ensuing months. Issues over Newsom's response to the January wildfires in L.A., making Democrats angry over the reversal of positions like transgender athletes, federal reversals of pet state projects, and many more have cratered support since the beginning of the year. In January he was second only to Harris. Now he sits at a distant fifth with only 5% support.

Currently, the former Vice President sits at 28% support, 13 points ahead of the next closest candidate, former Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg. Without Harris in the race, Newsom jumps up to third in polling, but only climbs up to 10 percent, well behind Buttigieg and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ).

And the latest Echelon poll, which was released on Monday isn't rosy for him either. Harris leads with

32%, followed by Buttigieg with 10%, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) with 8% and Booker with 6%. Newsom is tied for fifth with 5%, along with Governor Tim Walz (D-MN) and Governor JB Pritzker (D-IL). By contrast, for the GOP side of the poll, Vice President JD Vance sits at 44%, with former South Carolina Governor garnering 8% and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis leveling at 7%.

While polling this early is by no means an indicator who the candidate will be, they do give a good baseline on how Americans, and especially people within their respective parties feel about them. Harris is high right now coming off the 2024 election and constant media attention over speculation that she might run for Governor in 2026. Buttigieg has the same air of mystery around his political future after declining to not run for the Senate in Michigan. Booker has been very outspoken against Trump policies, and thus has seen his star rise amongst Dems since Trump was inaugurated. AOC has been AOC. Newsom though has seemingly done everything possible to sabotage himself this early on, and thus giving other candidates more ammunition against him

should he bounce back up.

This is by no means the end for Newsom. He has plenty of time to get back up. If Harris opts to be Governor instead and a few other candidates fall into a tailspin, Newsom could be right back up there. What happens in the 2026 midterms could also influence what Newsom does, or what happens to the other candidates.

But right now, viewing it all at a metric standpoint, Newsom needs to shake things up fast if he wants to get the Democratic slot in 2028. He is rapidly running out of things to tout in California. His electric car policies are swiftly fading, homelessness he is currently taking more drastic measures on, and that's not even counting all things from his past that would come up in a debate. All candidates would have to likely defend what they did during the COVID pandemic, and as soon as someone mentions the French Laundry incident, Newsom will have to be on the defensive.

There are numerous reasons why Newsom is down right now. And even though primaries are two and a half years away, polling shows that he needs to start doing all he can now. It kind of explains that new homeless ordinance. ★

Newsom Blames California's Worsening State Budget Outlook on Trump's Tariffs



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

As Governor Gavin Newsom unveiled a revised 2025 to 2026 budget on May 14, he blamed a "Trump slump" from President Donald Trump's tariffs and other economic moves as the major factor in increasing the state's deficit by another \$12 billion.

"California is under assault," Newsom told reporters at a budget briefing, declaring that Trump's actions had created "a climate of deep uncertainty."

The initial budget Newsom proposed in January already had at least an \$11 billion gap between income and outgo that he filled with reserves, loans, deferrals, raids on special funds and accounting maneuvers.

State tax receipts were running ahead of expectations during the early part of the year, but after Trump imposed tariffs on imported goods, saying it would spur domestic production, Newsom and his budget staff revised revenue estimates downward, particularly personal income tax.

"Washington's imposition of tariffs has driven a downgrade in both the economic and revenue forecasts," the revised budget declares. "Combined with increased expenditure growth above the governor's (January) budget, most notably in Medi-Cal, the state must now close an estimated shortfall of \$12

billion to balance the budget and provide for a prudent discretionary reserve. This will require difficult but necessary decisions to reduce ongoing expenditure growth to maintain budget resilience and stability for critical state programs."

The revised budget maintains overall spending at virtually the same level of the January version, \$322 billion, but drops general fund expenditures by \$2 billion to \$226 billion.

As noted, the state also experienced a multibillion-dollar spike in costs for Medi-Cal, the state's health care system for the poor, which contributed to the \$12 billion deficit estimate. Newsom proposed a series of maneuvers to close the new deficit, primarily reductions in Medi-Cal, including a freeze on adult enrollments and \$100 per month premiums for Medi-Cal enrollees.

By singling out Medi-Cal as a major driver of state spending and urging reductions, Newsom was doing a 180-degree political pirouette from a year ago, when he was boasting about achieving nearly 100% medical care coverage for Californians with the addition of thousands of undocumented immigrants to the programs rolls.

The latest expansion of California's chronic budget gap, what fiscal experts deem a "structural deficit," makes it virtually certain that Newsom's governorship will end 19 months hence with the state's finances still unbalanced. The governor's own budget staff and the Legislature's nonpartisan budget advisor, Gabe Petek, have both projected multibillion-dollar deficits well into the future. It doesn't appear

that a sudden economic boom will provide fiscal salvation.

The revised budget projects that California's economy faces a sluggish future, with little overall job growth and unemployment rates, which are now among the nation's highest, virtually unchanged. Accordingly, state revenues are projected to increase slowly.

The forecasts don't assume that the national economy will drift into recession, as some economists are predicting due to Trump's tariffs. If one occurred, it would depress revenues even more.

The budget also does not assess the potential reductions in federal aid to states, particularly in health care, that Trump and Republicans in Congress have proposed. Medi-Cal and other social and medical programs are targets in both Washington and Sacramento because they are among the largest items in both federal and state budgets.

As services are trimmed to close budget gaps, advocates for the poor, public employee labor unions and progressive groups are increasing pressure for tax increases to balance the state's books.

Newsom has resisted those calls, but if the projected multi-year deficits become reality, the tax increase drumbeat will grow louder. He can and probably will continue to shun tax increases but if he does, the pressure will hit his successor, whom ever that is, immediately upon inauguration.

Dan Walters is one of the most decorated and widely syndicated columnists in California history, authoring a column four times a week that offers his view and analysis of the state's political, economic, social and demographic trends. ★

Rep. Kiley Responds to Medicaid for Illegal Immigrants Proposal

U.S. Rep. Kevin Kiley News Release

WASHINGTON (MPG) - Rep. Kevin Kiley (R-CA), author of the No Medicaid for Illegal Immigrants Act, responded to the Energy & Commerce Committee's decision to include a provision in the budget reconciliation text reducing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for states that provide Medicaid to illegal immigrants.

"I have spent the last several months meeting with healthcare providers throughout my district, along with nonprofits, with patient advocates, and many other stakeholders. All of these groups have conveyed to me the importance of protecting Medi-Cal. That is why I have opposed cutting benefits for eligible beneficiaries. But now, thanks to Governor Newsom and the Legislature's reckless actions, we could lose billions in federal funding, harming the very

vulnerable populations I have fought to protect," Rep. Kiley said.

Kiley also responded to Governor Newsom's recent proposal to freeze his policy of providing free Medi-Cal to income-eligible undocumented immigrants.

"Gov. Newsom is ending his reckless policy of giving free Medi-Cal to undocumented immigrants. The Governor is finally acknowledging what has long been obvious: this policy is misguided, unsustainable, and should never have been enacted.

However, Gov. Newsom has only partially repealed his disastrous policy. It needs to be reversed entirely, or Californians will continue to spend billions on coverage for illegal immigrants and our state will lose an even larger amount in federal Medicaid funding," Rep. Kiley said. ★

Fire Safe Council Shares Wildfire Preparedness Tips



An informational table about National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day in front of Tractor Supply draws visitors on May 3. The Rancho Murieta Regional Fire Safe Council presented the event to raise awareness about wildfire safety. On the right are Fire Safe Council members

Karen Hoberg and Dave Rhodes. Hoberg is presenting an emergency preparedness backpack to the Hibbard Family, from left, Grace Hibbard, Vanessa Hibbard, Charlotte Hibbard, Allyson Hibbard, Ryan Hibbard, Dilma Gomes and Antonio Gomes. Photo by Gail Bullen

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Support Sought for Wilton Memorial Rose Garden

The Wilton Memorial Rose Garden is next to the Wilton Office at 11090 Jeff Brian Lane, Wilton. It has over 500 roses honoring family and friends. The garden is a serene place to visit and meditate or enjoy the roses' fragrance.

If you would like to volunteer to help prune or deadhead roses throughout the year, please send an email or text with your name and phone number. You will be added to our volunteer list and notified of our cleanup days.

The garden also has a commemorative brick path to commemorate birthdays, anniversaries and more. We are compiling a list of those interested in purchasing custom-engraved bricks for \$75. We also seek a stone mason to lay the bricks and volunteer their time.

We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and have limited funds. If you would like to donate money, our Venmo is @wiltonccnp. If you would like to send a check, please write "Rose Garden" in the note and write the check to "Wilton Community Center."

The address is Wilton Community Center, P.O. Box 645, Wilton, CA 95693. Our Facebook page is facebook.com/wiltonrosegarden, and our email is wiltonrosegarden@gmail.com. If you have any questions, text or phone Catherine Rogers at 530-282-0672.

Two RM Memorial Day Services Planned

The Rancho Murieta Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Scout Troop 633 are planning separate events to commemorate Memorial Day on Monday, May 26.

The VFW event will begin at 1 p.m. at the gazebo near the North Gate. The Scout flag retirement ceremony will begin at 6 p.m. at the Lake Calero fire pit.

ETC Offers Scholarship Essay Contest

Entertainment, Theatre & Culture for Rancho Murieta (ETC) is sponsoring its annual essay contest for graduating high school seniors who live in Rancho Murieta North or South. The winner will

be awarded a \$2,000 scholarship, which will go directly to the college, university or trade school she or he will attend in the Fall of 2025 or Spring of 2026 for application toward tuition and fees.

Essays must address one of three questions: 1. How have Technology, Artificial Intelligence, and Social Media influenced the Arts for the better or for the worse? 2. Discuss why you feel it is important to support Arts Education in the schools and the Arts in our Communities? 3. Explain how Experiencing the Arts, dance, music, visual art, theater, has made you a better person.

Essays must be 550 to 600 words in length and entries must be post-marked by May 30. The contest winner will be announced on July 26 at Lake Clementia amphitheater prior to the concert. The application form with contest rules is available at the Rancho Murieta Association Building or by request at philan.eterm@gmail.com.

For more information about the scholarship program, contact Stephanie Stanislaus, Philanthropy chair, at

916-354-0901.

CSD Hires Security Sergeant

The Rancho Murieta Community Services District has hired a full-time administrative security sergeant, Branden Arino. He is returning to the Security Department after five years working at a correctional facility in Louisiana.

Before he left the district, Arino was a patrol officer, so many residents will probably remember him. He can be reached at barino@rmcsd.com.

CSD Establishes Security Hotline Email

Rancho Murieta residents with security issues have a new option for contacting the Rancho Murieta Community Services District to receive a timely response: securityhotline@RMCSd.com.

Residents also can reach security 24 hours a day by calling 916-354-CARE (2263). However, residents experience a life-threatening emergency requiring immediate police, fire or ambulance assistance should call 911. ★

CSD, General Manager Morris Settle for \$375,000

Continued from page 1

The River Valley Times filed a public records request for a copy of the settlement agreement. The district provided the document on May 13.

Settlement Agreement

The settlement agreement identifies the two parties: the employer, the district; and the employee, Morris. It states that the employee, through her attorney, submitted a government claim and made allegations related to her employment, referred to in the document as "the Action."

"Employer adamantly denies Employee's Allegations," the agreement states. "Nonetheless, in order to avoid the substantial expense and inconvenience of litigation, the Parties now desire to fully and finally settle all claims asserted in, as well as all issues that were raised or could have been raised in the Action, on the terms set forth in this agreement."

Reactions

The River Valley Times contacted Morris for



Rancho Murieta Community Services District General Manager Mimi Morris will receive a \$375,000 settlement and will resign.

comment about the settlement. In response, she emailed a lengthy statement on May 13. Morris began by outlining her contributions to the district during her tenure and concluded with the following comments: "Despite unexpected health issues that arose about a year into my tenure, I continued to push hard, advancing the progress to get the District on a solid foundation financially and operationally.

"Accordingly, it was a great shock to be treated with such disdain by one board member. My own commitment to the integrity of my work and my professional and personal reputation compelled me to

stand up for myself in the face of such abuse.

"I would have appreciated seeing the successful outcome of my many efforts to improve the organization, and so feel a great disappointment to be leaving so many things unfinished, but some made it clear that my contributions were not welcome."

When River Valley Times offered Booth the opportunity to respond to those comments, he emailed the following statement on May 13: "When I assumed the position on the Board of Directors in December 2022, I committed to be an agent for change, to promote transparency and accountability, and to act in the best interests of the community. I tend to be direct in my communications and to expect timely, complete, and correct staff work, especially from the highest-paid employees in the district. I do not agree with a settlement for meritless claims as it does not serve the interests of CSD or the community."

According to the agreement, Morris has agreed to

resign.

"Upon signing this Agreement, Employee will go out on a leave of absence, using her available leave credits," it said. "While on leave, Employee's duties and responsibilities might be performed by an interim General Manager who will be appointed by the Board of Directors."

The agreement further states that Morris will resign after using her accrued leave credits or earlier, if she chooses, in which case the district will pay out any unused credits. In either case, she must submit a formal letter of resignation.

Background

The conflict between Morris and Booth became public on Jan. 6, when the board held a special meeting to evaluate her performance.

Before the board moved into closed session, without Booth, Morris publicly accused him of retaliation, discrimination and harassment. Morris also disclosed that she had filed an internal complaint against him following the Nov. 20 board meeting.

After entering closed session, directors voted 4-0 to place Morris on administrative leave pending an investigation into her grievance.

Booth responded to the River Valley Times on Jan. 7, stating, "I categorically deny that there has been any discrimination against her for any reason."

Morris' primary complaints centered on Booth's alleged insistence that she return to the office some months after being allowed to work from home, due to a medical condition. Morris also claimed that Booth had harmed her reputation by discussing her performance during the open session of the November board meeting.

Two days after the Jan. 6 meeting, Morris' attorney filed a government claim against the district, expanding on her allegations against Booth. However, her claim also named Merchant, Director Linda Butler and District Counsel Enright as district employees allegedly responsible for "causing injury."

Under California law, public employees must file

a government claim before suing a governmental entity, providing an opportunity to resolve the issue before litigation.

In an executive session during the Feb. 19 board meeting, the board voted 4-0 to deny Morris' government claim, clearing the way for her to proceed with a lawsuit. The board also held a special meeting on March 14 to confer with legal counsel about Morris' situation.

After the closed session, Merchant announced that Morris would return from administrative leave.

Morris resumed her duties on March 24. However, on the same day, Board President Booth notified the district that he would be unable to attend any committee or board meetings for the time being.

Despite returning to work, Morris didn't attend board committee meetings on May 6 and May 8.

When The River Valley Times asked Merchant about her absence, he declined to comment, citing it as a personnel matter.

This story is also at the rivervalleytimes.com. ★

SECURITY LOGS

Following is a summary of activity for the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Security Department for the following dates.

Note: these log entries are condensed. For full security log details, go to the CSD website at www.rmcsd.com.

May 8
5:53 p.m., Patrol responded to returning taco vendors outside next to #59 fire station. Patrol told them they are trespassing on private property and they did not leave. Sacramento County Sheriff showed up and advised these unpermitted taco vendors to not come back to Rancho Murieta community.

May 9
4:21 p.m., Vehicle Accident: Eastbound just beyond river bridge. RMA, CSD Patrol, Cal Fire Prevention on scene. Individual solo accident. No injuries involved.

6:07 p.m., Resident of Topspin Way had an outboard motor on their boat. RMA rule 9 section 4 states that any gas-powered motors are banned from being on any of the lakes.

11:50 p.m., Found a white Toyota Camry parked near the park at Clementia. Found three juvenile subjects at the park. Reminded them of the lake hours and they departed.

May 11
12:07 a.m., RMA Rule

Violation: patrol found vehicle circling Lake Calero. Citation issued.

4:32 a.m., RMA Rule Violation: Silver GMC truck with boat trailer found unoccupied at Lake Clementia after hours. Citation issued.

May 14
4:31 a.m., RMA Rule Violation: Guest vehicle parked overnight in Guest Parking on Camino Del Lago in "no parking" zone blocking access to the 3-B Lift Station near the wooden bridge. Citation issued.

7:29 a.m., Upon arrival, located a manhole lid removed from the lift station, posing a fall hazard. CSD workers located lid

approximately 50 feet east of the lift station in bushes. Suspects unbolted gaining access to manhole. Time of occurrence is unknown; suspect(s) gone on arrival.

CSD to secure manhole.
5:47 p.m., Trespassing: Burger King manager called on three boys who have been banned from all businesses in the plaza.

Patrol had a conversation with them. Talked to manager as to let them finish eating their food and they will leave without incident. ★



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Tahara Named Esquire IMAX Teacher of the Year

SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Kirsten Tahara of Ethel I. Baker Elementary School in the Sacramento City Unified School District has been named the 2024/2025 Esquire IMAX Teacher of the Year.

The prestigious award was presented during a ceremony at the Esquire IMAX Theatre in downtown Sacramento on May 13, according to the SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union, in partnership with ABC10 Sacramento, Esquire IMAX Theatre, Papa Murphy's Pizza and the Sacramento State College of Education.

Tahara was selected from a pool of 12 monthly award recipients. She has taught within the Sacramento City Unified School District for 29 years.

Before her teaching career, Tahara attended Sacramento State University, where she received her bachelor's degree and a multiple-subject teaching credential.

"Teachers are role models and mentors who educate and shape the lives of children who will one day be our future

leaders, so it's important to teach with integrity, purpose, patience and kindness," Tahara said. "It still amazes me to watch students go from not knowing the alphabet, how to hold a pencil or speak English to being able to read, write and speak English, all within a school year. Each child is different and learns differently, so from the tiniest of steps to the greatest leaps, every bit of progress made is a success."

As part of her Esquire IMAX Teacher of the Year recognition, Tahara received a \$5,000 prize from SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union.

"Ms. Tahara personifies all of the attributes that are associated with educators who create a tangible difference in the lives of students and prepare them to succeed," said Julie DePrada-Schott, specialist, school and community relations at SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union. "SchoolsFirst FCU is proud to support this important initiative to recognize the outstanding contributions of educators in the Sacramento region."

In place for 20-plus years, the Teacher of the Month program highlights local



From left are Nathan Calhoun, assistant manager, membership development at SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union; Kirsten Tahara, ABC10 Teacher of the Year Winner; Julie DePrada-Schott, specialist, school and community relations at SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union; and Brittney Owens, specialist, financial education at SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union. Photo courtesy of SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union

teachers making a difference in the lives of their students and families.

To nominate a local teacher in the greater Sacramento/Stockton/Modesto

area for a future Teacher of the Month award, please visit abc10.com/teacher-of-the-month.



Entertainment, Theatre & Culture for Rancho Murieta Announces a

\$2000 College Scholarship

to be Awarded to a Rancho Murieta Graduating High School Senior

This year's essay questions are listed below. Please select one of the following:

1. How have Technology, Artificial Intelligence and Social Media influenced the Arts for the better or for the worse?
2. Discuss why you feel it is important to support Arts Education in the schools and the Arts in our communities?
3. Explain how experiencing the Arts (dance, music, visual art, theater) has made you a better person?

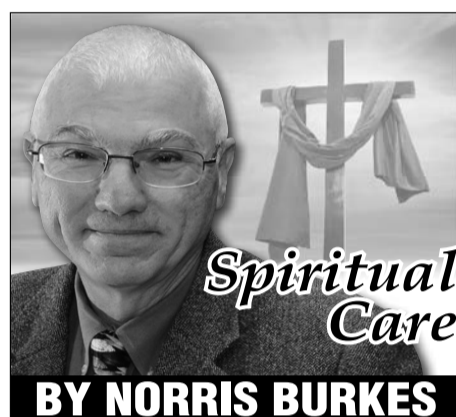
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Stephanie Stanislaus
916-354-0901

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Keeping the Arts Alive in Our Community!

For Safety's Sake, Live your Life



BY NORRIS BURKES

I often felt that if I hadn't become a chaplain, I'd have become a safety officer.

For example, whenever I volunteer with Chispa Project in Honduras, I'm the guy who steadies the ladder, double checks that the lunch produce is washed correctly and then I police the perimeter for bad guys. (Bad guys don't mess with Chaplain Safety Officer.)

The irony is that my interest in this subject comes from the tragedies I've witnessed in my chaplain career. In death's aftermath I've offered comfort to those whose loved ones were accidentally struck, shot, suffocated, burned, poisoned, fallen or electrocuted.

From those tragic encounters, I've developed a preoccupation with safety that my children say has cost them some of their freedoms. I've always made them wear hats in the sun, helmets on the bike trail and seat belts in the car. For safety's sake, I've made them chew slowly, run quickly and sleep adequately.

They learned pretty well, but never did I realize just how much their training might come back to benefit me.

In 2011, my wife and I flew to Denver to spend a few days with our daughter, Sara. We had no agenda. Just a little rest and relaxation.

Following our late-night arrival, we were ushered into our accommodations, a garage conversion with an open-flame furnace. Playing the fastidious safety inspector, I checked to make sure that Sara had vented the heater properly through a nearby window. She had. Then, I tested the smoke and CO2 detector. Everything worked properly.

Becky and I said our good nights and settled in for a cozy winter sleep, snug

under blankets, basking in a glowing heat.

About 2 a.m., we were jolted from bliss with a high-pitched alarm. I saw no smoke, so I focused my squinting eyes on the CO2 detector. Carbon monoxide levels were pushing high enough to send us singing in the celestial choir with Jesus himself.

We immediately turned off the heater, opened all the windows, and retreated to the living room, shutting the garage door behind us. After 20 minutes, levels returned to normal, and we re-retired to bed — sans heater but with a double scoop of blankets.

If you're anticipating my point here, you're probably looking for me to quote the Christian Scripture, "It is appointed unto a man once to die and after that the judgment."

Those familiar with this Scripture often use stories such as these to admonish people to live full throttle, seize the day and live every day as if it were their last.

There is some wisdom in those truisms, but honestly, I don't want to live every day like it's my last.

I also need some days to be "regular." I need days that start with a decent breakfast, some time in my pastor's office and a drive home with takeout pizza to watch "Amazing Race" with my amazing wife.

Nothing wrong with that. We all need some routine days where we hold those whom we love, exhale gratitude for the life we are granted and refuel our needs for the next day.

Perhaps today wasn't your best day. If today was only average, then I say, be content that you had no close calls with death to throw you into an existential funk. You don't need to always be prompting yourself with the morbid thought that this day might be your last.

But more than anything, I say, "Stay safe. For safety's sake, live your life. There will likely be a tomorrow."

Sign up to receive this weekly column in your email box at <https://thechaplain.net/newsletter/> or send me your email address to comment@thechaplain.net.

All of Norris's books can be ordered on Amazon. Autographed copies can be obtained on his website www.thechaplain.net or by sending a check for \$20 for each book to 10566 Combie Rd. Suite 6643 Auburn, CA 95602.



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MEALS ON WHEELS SACRAMENTO COUNTY

ETC Awards Grants to Support the Arts at Three Local Schools

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Entertainment, Theatre & Culture for Rancho Murieta has awarded grants to support art programs at three schools.

ETC Philanthropy Chair Stephanie Stanislaus delivered \$1,000 checks on May 14 to Katherine L. Albani Middle School (KAMS), Pleasant Grove High School (PGHS) and Cosumnes River Elementary (CRES).

Middle school theater arts teacher Michelle Campbell accepted the check as students in her Exploring Art and Entertainment class looked on with interest. She plans to use the funds to purchase new microphone rentals and cover costume rental costs next year.

Ashley Shapiro, who teaches theater arts at Pleasant Grove High School, said she plans to

stage a musical next year and will use the funds to cover the licensing fees and costume rentals.

Cosumnes River Elementary fourth-grade teacher Vandy Passmore accepted the check on behalf of all the student productions at the school to pay for props and costumes. Her class had just performed "Gold Dust or Bust" at an assembly. The third-grade students were scheduled to perform "Grammosaurus," and the fifth-grade students "The American Revolution."

Before presenting the check at each location, Stanislaus explained the ETC mission to the students. "Our goal is to keep the arts alive in the community," she said.

Stanislaus emphasized the importance of art in schools. She believes art classes are unique because students genuinely enjoy attending them, and through arts, people learn



Katherine L. Albani Middle School teacher Michelle Campbell accepts a \$1,000 check on May 14 from Stephanie Stanislaus to support the school's theater arts programs. Stanislaus is the philanthropy chair of the Entertainment Theatre & Culture for Rancho Murieta (ETC). Photos by Gail Bullen

to "walk in someone else's shoes" and become more understanding of others.

Three middle school students also shared why they were enjoying their class.

One female student told Stanislaus that the class makes people happy and allows her to be creative. A male student said he appreciates doing something that

makes him feel deeply and brings him joy. Another male student said he chose the class to try something different and push himself out of his comfort zone,

hoping it would help him grow.

This story is also online at therivervalleytimes.com. ★



Pleasant Grove High School students applaud after Stanislaus presents a \$1,000 check to their theater teacher, Ashley Shapiro.



Stanislaus encourages Cosumnes River Elementary students in second and fourth grade to remain involved in the arts as fourth-grade teacher Vandy Passmore looks on.

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